

A recently-discovered *Poecilmitis* Butler (Lepidoptera : Lycaenidae) from the Western Cape

By C. G. C. DICKSON

Poecilmitis rileyi spec. nov.

Resembling as a whole *P. thysbe* (L.) but with certain constant differences in both sexes, especially on the upperside, which readily distinguish it from this species.

Male. Upperside.

Forewing. Blue extends along costa to above discocellular black spot and, along innermargin, almost reaches lower angle of wing; an extension of blue scaling more or less in the form of a ray, above vein 4, over the orange area. Demarkation between the blue and orange colouring not sharply defined. The usual black spots of the *thysbe* group generally rather small or of moderate size, with the lower ones tending to be partly obscured by the blue colouring and the lowest one, in area 1 b, entirely obscured. Veins mostly black-scaled, outwardly. Costal black edging beyond the blue area narrow to rather wide, and with small white dashes towards apex. Hindmarginal black border on the whole rather wide. Cilia with orange colouring between the dark ends of the veins, which extends on to the wing-surface, and with white spaces outwardly—or almost entirely black, with small white spaces.

Hindwing. The "solid" blue extending up to about the end of the cell and, towards innermargin, more outwardly; beyond this area a dull whitish zone, some 3.5 mm. wide, which contrasts quite strongly with the remaining orange wing-surface, but the whole of this inner area shot with vivid light-blue in certain lights, which produces an iridescent effect over part of the orange area itself. The normal black spots of the group absent (or, in occasional specimens, but imperfectly developed). Innermarginal concavity pale greyish. Some rather dark scaling above vein 7 and a small white patch adjoining margin. A trace of dark edging along upper part of margin and the vein-ends finely marked with black elsewhere. Cilia largely orange, with the upper portion containing some white—or orange with white spaces between all or most of the vein-ends.

Underside.

Forewing. Colouring and marking essentially as in *P. thysbe*, but the main orange field inclined to be a little lighter and the terminal and subapical areas paler and more fawn-coloured, especially a small area beyond the upper black spots; some of these spots with the usual steely centres. Submarginal dark line on the whole more prominent than in *thysbe*. Cilia dark-brown to orange at vein-ends and the intervening spaces fawn-coloured, marked with white.

Hindwing. General colour fawn-brown, with darker areas and markings and more or less silvery lituræ as in *thysbe*. In comparison with this species, the darker brown markings stand out rather more clearly, individually, against the lighter areas of the wing. Anal-angular projection with touches of dark colouring. Cilia very much as in forewing.

Colour of body and ancillary parts essentially as in *thysbe*, but the hair on head and on thorax, anteriorly, inclined to be lighter.

Length of forewing: 13.5-15 mm.

Female. Upperside.

Forewing. Silvery-blue from base pale for a female of this group; of limited extent, reaching a point little more than half-way along cell and not extending very much further from base elsewhere. Costa broadly creamy-white nearer base. The usual black spots present. Hind-marginal black border relatively broad, and widening further towards apex. Cilia clearly chequered with blackish and white, with a little orange on wing-surface itself where some of the white divisions occur.

Hindwing. The bluish area somewhat darker as a whole than in forewing, extending to end of cell and with a considerable projection nearer innermargin, towards anal-angle. The black spots well defined but varying much in size and those in areas 4 and 6 tending to coalesce with the intervening marking in area 5, owing to the elongation of this latter marking. Innermarginal concavity creamy-white. Subcostal area above vein 7 pale greyish. A small white patch on wing-surface adjoining margin above vein 7. Wing-margin bordered broadly with black along its upper portion and edged with black along most of remaining part—or only slightly edged at upper portion and with orange interruptions elsewhere. Innermarginal projection brownish towards its extremity. Cilia almost as in forewing, but with the white spaces much broader than the dark ones.

Underside.

Forewing. Colouring and the marking (allowing for the rounded termen) substantially the same as those of the male. The dark submarginal line generally more prominent. Cilia with rather dark, and white, divisions but with much less contrast between these than on upperside.

Hindwing. Substantially as in the male. Cilia nearly as in forewing, but with wider light spaces. Body marked and coloured practically as in male.

Length of forewing: 13.5-16.75 mm.

♂ Holotype: Brand Vlei, near Worcester, Cape Province, 21.1.1965. B. M. Type No. Rh. 18503.

♀ Allotype: same data, except for date of capture (11.12.1963). B. M. Type No. Rh. 18504.

Paratypes are all from the type locality, but are dated as follows: 21.1.1965, 11♂, 1♀; 3.1.1964, 1♂, 1♀; 15.3.1965, 2♂, 1♀; 11.12.1963, 1♂; 20.9.1965, 2♂.

A further 13♂ and 3♀ paratypes from the same locality, with various dates of capture, are in the collections of the writer, his nephew C. W. Wykeham, and several other collections in Southern Africa (all collected by the writer with the exception of 2 males and 2 females taken by C. W. Wykeham, on 11.xii.1963).

There is individual variation of the type which is normal in the *Poecilmitis thysbe* group. This will probably be more marked in early spring (or possibly winter?) specimens, when these are eventually procured. A male paratype has the forewing subapical area broadly black.

Besides the differences pointed out in the description, this butterfly differs, in the male, from *P. thysbe* in the slightly different tone of the blue colouring, which is, however, intensely metallic in some lights; in the presence of the broad, pale median zone in the hindwing; and, generally, in a small difference in the tint of the orange ground colour. The forewing

of the male is a little less elongated towards the apex and thus rather more "square" in shape than in *thysbe*.

A female of this most attractive member of the group was first taken at Brand Vlei on 7th December 1963, under unfavourable weather conditions and, as it clearly represented a "new" butterfly, the locality was revisited on the 11th in order to secure males of the species. More specimens were subsequently obtained in the same area, but they were found to be fairly localised and, except in certain spots, the males, with their quick flight, were elusive and quite often disappeared from the spot in which they were first seen. This species occurs on rather sandy ground, somewhat sparsely covered with low bushes, and the foodplant is suspected to be a species of *Aspalathus* (Leguminosae).

This butterfly is dedicated to Mr. N. D. Riley, as a small tribute to his valuable systematic work on South African butterflies in past years and, particularly, as a token of appreciation of the kind assistance received from him by the present writer over a period of more than 30 years.

Mr. G. E. Tite has most obligingly read the manuscript prior to its publication.

"Blencathra", Cambridge Avenue, St. Michael's Estate, Cape Town.

On the occurrence *Oegoconia deauratella*, H.-S. (Lep., Symmocidae) in the British Isles

By P. A. GODDARD

During 1965 I augmented the attractive effect of my room light, overlooking the gardens bordering Harrow Weald Recreation Ground, by directing an Anglepoise lamp out of the window when I was not using it. One result of this was that during July I obtained several specimens of a striped moth, vaguely gelechiid in appearance, which I did not recognise. I was most surprised to be told that they were *Oegoconia quadripuncta* Haw., as they looked quite distinct from the cabinet specimens I had seen, the whitish-yellow transverse fasciae on the forewings being so much reduced that only the central one was complete, the overall appearance being of a blackish moth with narrow whitish stripes.

Apparently this "dark form" is widely accepted as the common one in the London suburbs, the supposedly typical "light form", with broad irregular yellowish fasciae being more or less the rural one.

Last winter I made routine genitalia preparations from my specimens. I also made preparations from two males of the "light form" which had emerged on 16.8.65 from a handful of Restharrow which I had picked idly on Portland (Dorset) the previous day. It was clear that the two "forms" were in fact distinct species. I contacted Dr. L. Gozmany of Budapest, who is working on the Palaearctic Symmocidae, to find out what the other species might be, and even which of the two is the true *quadripuncta*. Briefly, he informed me that our two species are already known to be widespread at least throughout Europe, and have been the subject of much nomenclatural confusion which has been difficult to resolve as the type of species *quadripuncta* Haw is lost. Dr. Gozmany has found that this name applies to our "light" species, that of our "dark" species being *deauratella* H.-S.